



# Our Insect Enemies



## Keep Pests Out Of The Pantry

(NAPSA)—Refrigerators have long played host to leftovers, which, if forgotten about, can end up as a “mystery product” found spoiled and dangerous to eat months after its initial offering. While spoiled refrigerated food may attract more attention due to the noticeable smell and look of the items, food spoilage is not relegated only to items left in the refrigerator. Before pouring that next bowl of cereal, homeowners should be on the lookout for uninvited pests that may be contaminating common household items.

According to the National Pest Management Association (NPMA), a group of insects referred to as “pantry pests” can infest common kitchen pantry items such as flour, dry cereal, spices, candies and chocolate. In addition to food items, some of these insects are attracted to dried flowers and pot-pourri, making common household décor another susceptible breeding ground.

A variety of insects fit into the pantry pest category, including many species of beetles and weevils. The most common type of pest, however, is the Indian meal moth. These small moths are easily identified by distinctive markings on their wings—a gray base with a coppery luster on the outer two-thirds.

Fortunately, these moths do not directly cause disease or damage to the home. However, they can be a major nuisance to homeowners due to their quick breeding capabilities. The female moth can lay up to 200 eggs in or near a food source in just one week, leading to severe infestations and food contaminations in a short amount of time.



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Luckily, homeowners can follow several NPMA-recommended tips to prevent pantry pest visits: When shopping, homeowners should only purchase sealed packages that show no signs of damage. At home, food should be stored in plastic or glass containers with sealed lids. After baking, make sure all counters, pantries and cabinets are clean and free of crumbs. Haven't baked in a while? Before reaching for that bag of flour or any other susceptible pantry item, ensure the expiration date has not passed.

When it comes time to pack up seasonal décor, make sure all items are stored in airtight containers and put away in a dry environment such as a closet or attic.

If you suspect you have an infestation, contact a licensed pest professional to inspect and treat the problem. To learn more about pantry pests or to find a pest professional in your area, visit [www.pestworld.org](http://www.pestworld.org).